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Local Boilermakers, Contractors Assemble to Create More Job Opportunities

Boilermakers Local Union 105 President Kenny Sturgill says work for his members has been steady, and the future looks promising. In an area of the state with a 7.3% unemployment rate, that is good news for these skilled residents of southern Ohio.

“The decline in the coal industry has meant a decline in our industry,” said Sturgill, “But we’re starting to see an increase in some areas of the state.”

Boilermakers assemble, install, and repair boilers, closed vats, and other large containers that hold liquids and gases – and safety and accuracy are of the highest importance.

This week, Local 105, located in Piketon, hosted 30 Boilermakers from around Ohio for their annual Common Arc multi-employer weld test. Representatives for 20 contractors were on hand to certify each weld was up to their standards.

“Safety and training are the biggest concerns for contractors,” said Grady Shelton, on site to certify Boilermakers for the Minnotte Contracting Corporation, in Pittsburgh. “We work with customers that require union workers, and we only employ union trades.”

The certification testing benefits both Boilermakers and contractors. “Each certification is another opportunity for work,” said Sturgill. “And the technical and safety training required by local unions is second to none.” The certification testing is just one example of union labor constantly improving and acquiring new skills.

From a contracting perspective, having union Boilermakers Common Arc qualified reduces costs to contractors while maintaining the current standards of quality and performance.

“Because contractor representatives review each weld and certify each Boilermaker, we’re not wasting time testing on the job site,” said Shelton. “These individuals are taking their certification test on their own, unpaid time. That’s saving contractors time and money.”

Each test can range from four to six hours and, on the larger jobs, can involve up to 200 Boilermakers – costing contractors and job owners up to 1200 man hours.

Common Arc certification is strict and stringent testing that is in accordance with Section IX of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) code. “Because the contracting agencies certify the welders, the Boilermakers can be put to work on any job by that contractor - not just those in southern Ohio - providing additional opportunities for work,” explained Lead Proctor Larry Ross, who was at Local 105 to administer the examinations.

To help prepare participants for the certification testing, Local 105 opened its doors to all Boilermakers a week prior to the exam, and had instructors on hand. All costs associated with the testing are covered by the union.

“We’re the only craft that has individual contractors certify members,” said Sturgill. “As far as I’m concerned, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers has the best system out there for training and certification, and getting our members to work.”

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Boilermakers Local 105 holds jurisdiction in 35 counties in Southern Ohio. It was chartered on October 15, 1892 as Queen City Lodge 105 in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1993, it was moved to Piketon, Ohio. <http://www.boilermakerslocal105.com>